

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

No. 341.—VOL. VII.

SATURDAY, JULY 12, 1890.

PRICE 1½d.

UNCHARTED ROCKS.

PARADOXICAL as it may seem at first sight, the stable thing in the world is the fluid sea, and the shifting thing is the solid land. Scientific research and geological investigation have alike proved that the land is not stationary, but is either rising or falling, and that this change of level as compared with that of the sea has been going on through all recorded time. This alteration of elevation, either sudden or gradual, affects not only the land-masses elevated above the sea-level, but also influences the sea-floor; and it is of the latter phase of the subject that we propose to treat in the present paper.

Along our own littoral, the ever-shifting bars and sandbanks of our river estuaries necessitate frequent soundings and rebuoyage. The silting up of river-mouths, while it is a gradual, is neither a regular nor constant process. The deflections of the river-currents, and the consequent changes they make in the bands of silt which line the floors of our river-mouths, are frequently produced by very simple causes. It is often found that after a heavy and prolonged rain-storm, during which an abnormal quantity of water has passed along the tidal ways, new river-channels have been formed; old ones, before perfectly navigable, have been rendered some two or three feet shallower; while the increased momentum of the current has been such as to scour out considerable quantities of silt from its upper reaches and deposit it much farther seawards. So perfect, however, is the system of regular and systematic sounding which at present obtains in the British Islands, that but few, if any, maritime disasters are traceable to uncharted rocks or shoals.

According to the latest Report of the Hydrographer of the Admiralty, some eleven vessels were engaged in making nautical surveys during the year 1888. Of these ships, seven were steamers, and one a sailing schooner belonging to Her Majesty's navy; two were hired steamships, and one was a colonial gunboat lent by

the Queensland Government. H.M.S. *Triton* was engaged for seven weeks in the Thames estuary. Some very important discoveries were made relative to the position and depth of the deep-water approaches to London. In the Duke of Edinburgh Channel, a small patch in the centre with a least depth of thirty feet in 1882, was found to have become a mile in length and three cables' length in breadth, with the shoalest part twenty-two feet deep at lowest spring-tide. The Alexandra Channel, which is, next to the Duke of Edinburgh Channel, the safest approach to London, had decreased to nearly half the width it had in 1876. An examination of the estuary of the Dee revealed an additional silting-up of the sinuous river-channels by which vessels are enabled to reach the once important port of Chester.

In the river Mersey much trouble has been occasioned of late years by the advent of the Pluckington Bank. Owing to some unaccountable deflection of the currents in the tidal portion of the river, a spit of sand has been deposited which renders useless, at certain states of spring-tides, the famous Liverpool Landing Stage. This magnificent structure, half a mile in length, is sometimes grounded at low-water at its southern extremity. When this occurs, the congestion of the ferry, coast, and channel traffic is incredible; and the confusion is often increased by passenger steamers faking the ground while endeavouring to approach their berths; while such is the crowding at the north end of the stage, which still floats in deep water at all states of the tide, that collisions are frequent among the vessels arriving and departing, from a curtailed berthing accommodation. Partial relief has, however, been afforded by an elaborate system of sluicing, by means of which the stored-up water from some adjacent docks is made to flow under the stage at low-water, thus scouring out a considerable portion of the silt accumulated there.

These hindrances to navigation, however, so long as they are regularly noted and charted,

afford but a trivial source of danger to the mariner. Any natural force, however, which produces sudden alterations in the conformation of the sea-bed may raise up a danger to the navigator which the most cautious and efficient seamanship cannot guard against. Foremost among these disturbing powers are earthquakes and volcanoes. Earthquake and volcanic forces do not confine their action to that portion of the land-masses elevated above the sea-level. The fact that volcanoes are found near or on the sea-coast lends colour to the hypothesis that submarine volcanic activity is infinitely greater than volcanic action on the land.

In the July of 1831 a mass of dust, sand, and scoriae thrown out of a submarine volcano in the Mediterranean formed an island with a circumference of a mile and a quarter. The elevation of the highest point was estimated to be one hundred and seventy feet above the sea-level, and the diameter of the crater was about four hundred yards. This island made its appearance about thirty miles from the coast of Sicily. As soon as the eruption ceased, the action of the waves began to reduce the island; and before the close of the year, Grahame's or Hotham's Island, as it is now styled, was disseminated as a stratum of volcanic detritus along that portion of the Mediterranean sea-bed.

Volcanic and seismic action usually go hand in hand, and the earthquake is just as important a factor in the alteration of the land-contour as the volcano is. In 1822 the whole South American coast for a distance of twelve hundred miles was elevated some three or four feet in a single night. An earthquake shock in North-west India in 1819 resulted in a large area of marsh and swamp known as the Runn of Cutch disappearing beneath the sea, while a district some fifty miles to the north of this was permanently raised. The effect of volcanic and earthquake action is not always, however, so patent. The volcanic products thrown up by a submarine volcano may not reach above the sea-level, or the depression or elevation of the sea-bed consequent upon seismic force may not be discovered until a maritime disaster makes the existence of the sunken danger a recognised fact. Further, earthquake action is constantly producing changes in the reefs of volcanic rocks surrounding the coasts of Iceland, Java, and the Sandwich Islands, a consensus of opinion being prevalent among those accustomed to navigate those localities that a chart of those seas, showing positions of rocks and depths of water adjacent, holds good only until the next volcanic outburst or earthquake shock. The stranding of H.M.S. *Sultan* in the much used waterway that washes the shores of Comino was caused by her striking on a rock or patch of rocks unmarked in the Admiralty chart, and where deep water was shown. The channel was surveyed in 1867, and the spot where the *Sultan* struck should, according to the chart, have been ten fathoms deep. Whether this rock was uncharted through an inefficient survey, or whether it is the product of volcanic or seismic action subsequent to 1867, will no doubt ever remain matter of speculation.

The discovery of the 'Avocet' rock in the frequented sea-route of the Red Sea affords

another striking example of a veritable danger to navigation remaining undiscovered in a crowded seaway, and of the extreme difficulty of proving the tangible existence of an alleged sunken rock even when every modern appliance is placed at the searcher's disposal. The *Avocet* struck upon an uncharted rock, and became a total wreck. At the Board of Trade inquiry, doubt was thrown upon the captain's statement as to the position of his vessel when striking, and he was believed to have lost his ship through negligent navigation. The captain of H.M.S. *Flying Fish*, however, to make quite sure that the alleged rock was purely hypothetical, was ordered to survey that part of the Red Sea where the *Avocet* struck. He found a hundred and four fathoms of water, but no trace of rock or wrecked vessel. The Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the *Avocet* was then reopened, and adjourned *sine die*.

Shortly after this, however, the ship *Teddington* struck upon the same submerged rock. H.M.S. *Griffon* proceeded to the venue of the disaster, but failed to discover the rock. H.M.S. *Sylvia* then searched for six weeks without localising this hidden danger. Then H.M.S. *Stork* was directed to make a final quest. She found the rock to be about three hundred yards from the spot where the *Sylvia* had lain at anchor during the greater period of her search. The position of this coral patch is defined as latitude $14^{\circ} 22' 8''$ north, and longitude $42^{\circ} 41' 32''$ east. This rock has but fifteen feet of water on it at low-water.

The loss of the royal mail-steamer *Cotopaxi* in the Strait of Magellan has been the means of locating a hitherto unknown danger to vessels using that interoceanic passage. To carry out a complete survey of the channels between the Atlantic and Pacific would be a labour that would take many years to perform; and as all maritime nations are interested in the removal of the barriers that make commercial intercourse by sea alike difficult and dangerous, it is but fair that each of the leading maritime States should contribute its quota towards the thorough examination of the network of seaways that constitute the Magellan Strait. The *Cotopaxi* disaster, though happily unattended by loss of life, shows what awful risks the navigators of the Strait are subject to.

Another rock constituting a serious danger to navigators on the high seas has just been discovered off the coast of Newfoundland, happily without any such disaster as marked the discovery of the *Avocet*, *Sultan*, and *Cotopaxi* rocks. Two years ago, a report reached the Admiralty from the harbour-master of St John's that two fishermen had found a shallow spot on a bank which lies some twenty-two miles south of Cape St Marz, and which is covered with thirty fathoms of water. One of Her Majesty's ships was therefore directed to make inquiries. No sign of a sunken rock, however, could be found, and the submerged danger was thereupon declared to be non-existent. After a while, however, the existence of the rock was again affirmed, and the surveying vessel *Gulnare* was directed to proceed to the locality and make further investigations. A fisherman named Patrick Lamb, who was found fishing near, consented to show the exact situation of the rock, which he alone knew of,

having discovered it accidentally. He at once guided the *Gulnare* to the spot, where a small pinnacle rock was found with but thirty-three feet of water over it. Ever since Lamb had discovered it, he had kept its whereabouts a secret, such an excellent fishing-ground the rock proved itself. The importance of this discovery cannot be too highly estimated; for the 'Lamb Rock'—as it is now called—lies right in the track of vessels making the Gulf of St Lawrence. In ordinary weather a vessel would pass over this danger in safety; but in rough weather, the heavy wave-disturbance of the Atlantic would inevitably result in her striking. She would then in all probability slip off into deep water and immediately founder. How many of the ocean mysteries and awful maritime disasters occur off the 'Banks,' and which leave no human survivor to tell the tale of the calamity, are traceable to the presence of the Lamb Rock will never be known; but it is matter for deep gratulation that such a danger to the navigator should at last have been discovered.

The United States Hydrographer has recently given notice that a sunken rock with eighteen feet of water over it has been discovered in Stephen's Passage, off the coast of Alaska. The circumjacent sea showed a uniform depth of from twenty to thirty fathoms.

Errors of omission, however, are not the only detractors from the merits of modern charts, either Admiralty or other. Many charted dangers have no tangible existence, and have been placed upon the charts either through the blunders of those entrusted with a survey, or from the declared evidence of merchant-service navigators, who, with no desire to be misleading, often make erroneous statements as to the discovery of 'new' rocks. Trunks of trees and baulks of timber have frequently been responsible for the addition of rocks to our charts. Nor is this to be wondered at, for sailors naturally shun anything that has the appearance of a rock, and a tree-trunk, barnacle-covered, with the sea breaking over it and fish sporting about it, must present such a similitude to a real rock, that nothing but the closest observation would serve to dispel the illusion. H.M.S. *Dart* has, after the most careful search, failed to discover any trace of the Rurick Rock, which, since 1822, has been assigned a position some thirty miles seaward from Hobart, the capital of Tasmania. The Minnie Carmichael Rock, said to be twelve miles from the east coast of Flinders Island, is also proved to be non-existent. The *Dart* also made soundings in two localities with the view of determining the exact locality of the Constance Reef, originally reported by a navigator of that name in 1804. As four of Her Majesty's vessels had previously endeavoured to find this reef before the *Dart* made her futile attempts, its existence is regarded as disproved; and, with the other rocks enumerated above, it has been expunged from the Admiralty charts, upon which it should never have been placed.

The frightful loss of life resulting from the foundering of the *Quetta*, consequent upon her striking upon an alleged uncharted rock in the Torres Strait, emphasises in a most painful manner the necessity of a thorough survey of the seaways by which Queensland is reached.

The Great Barrier Reef with its countless ramifications of coralline patches calls for the utmost skill and watchfulness on the part of navigators. In October of last year the *Taroba*, bound from London to Brisbane, struck on a rock, the previous existence of which was unknown. Fortunately, she got clear again almost immediately, and her commander managed to keep the water below the fires until he beached her on the soft mud of Keppel Bay. Here temporary repairs were effected, and she proceeded to Brisbane, where it was found that her keel and keel-plates were bent out of line for a distance of one hundred and thirty feet. A detached reef, on which the least depth is about fifteen feet, has since been discovered in the position where the vessel struck and where a depth of seven fathoms is marked on the chart.

It is gratifying to learn that shortly after the *Taroba* case the Admiralty despatched H.M.S. *Penguin* on an extended surveying expedition to these waters. The result will no doubt greatly add to the stock of knowledge already attained relative to the rocks, shoals, banks, and currents circumjacent to our antipodean littoral.

The safe conduct of the maritime industry of Great Britain is dependent to a very large extent upon the thorough reliability of the charts to which the navigators trust to apprise them of visible and sunken dangers. Examination of the sea-bed, where silting or volcanic and earthquake disturbance is rife, should be *regular* and *systematic*. Nautical surveying is one of the distinctive functions of the British navy in time of peace; and in this field of geographical research honours may be won as beneficial to the truest interests of a mercantile community as are those gained by the sterner glories of naval warfare.

MY SHIPMATE LOUISE.

THE ROMANCE OF A WRECK.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE BRIG'S LONGBOAT.

I WAS awakened by a knocking at the door. The little cabin was bright with sunshine, that was flashing off sea and sky upon the thick glass of the scuttle. 'Hallo!' I cried, 'who is that?' The voice of the young fellow Wilkins responded:

'Capt'n Braine's compliments, sir, and he'd be glad to know if there's anything you or the lady wants which it's in his power to supply ye with?'

I got out of the bunk and opened the door.

'Captain Braine is very kind,' said I to the real-faced youth, who stood staring at me with faint eyes under his white lashes and brows.—'What time is it, Wilkins?'

'Half-past eight, sir,' he answered.

I knocked upon the bulkhead. 'Are you awake, Miss Temple?'

'Oh yes,' she answered, her voice sounding weak through the partition.

'Captain Braine wishes to know if you are in want of anything it is in his power to let you have?'

'There are many things I want,' she exclaimed; 'but they are not to be had, I fear.'

I am afraid I shall have to use that comb.—I can do nothing with my hair, Mr Dugdale.

'All right, Wilkins,' said I; 'we shall be on deck in a few minutes.' He went away.

I found the comb that had belonged to Mr Chicken on a shelf, and knocked on Miss Temple's door. She opened it, and an arm of snow, of faultless shape, was projected to receive the comb. 'Thank you,' said she, whipping the door to, and I entered my cabin, calling out that I would wait for her there till she was ready.

Happily, in respect of toilet conveniences we were not wholly destitute. The water in my can was indeed salt, but I contrived to get some show of lather out of the fragment of marine soap which I found inside of the tin dish that served me as a wash-basin. I was without Miss Temple's scrupulosity, and found old Chicken's hairbrush good enough to flourish. There was a little parcel of razors, too, on the shelf where the comb had been, and with one of them I made shift to scrape my cheeks into some sort of smoothness, wholly by dint of feeling, for Miss Temple had Chicken's glass, and there was nothing in my cabin to reflect my countenance. By the time this little business was ended, and I had carefully concealed the pistol and powder-flask, Miss Temple was ready. She knocked on my door, and I stepped out.

I could see her but very imperfectly in the dim light of that steerage, yet it seemed to me that there was more vivacity in her eyes, more life in her carriage and air than I had witnessed in her on the yesterday. She told me that she had slept soundly, and that her mattress was as comfortable as her bed aboard the *Countess Ida*.

'I am heartily glad to hear that,' said I. 'You found the marine soap tough, I fear?'

'It cannot be good for the complexion, I should think,' said she with a slight smile.

'How shocking,' I exclaimed, as we moved to the hatch, 'would such a situation as yours be to a young lady who is dependent for her beauty on cosmetics and powder! How would Miss Hudson manage if she were here, I wonder?'

'Is there anything in sight, do you know, Mr Dugdale? That is a more important subject to me than complexions.'

'I did not ask; but we will find out.'

It was a brilliant morning, a wide blue, blinding flash of day, as it seemed to my eyes after the gloom below. The sea was all on fire under the sun, and the wind held it trembling gloriously. A hot and sparkling breeze in the same old quarter gushed freshly into the wide expanded wings of the *Lady Blanche*, whose swift pace over the smooth plain of ocean seemed a sort of miracle of sailing to me when I contrasted it with the rate of going of the *Countess Ida*. The flying-fish in scores sparked out from the barque's white sides. The foam came along her sheathing like a roll of cotton-wool to her wake. The ocean line ran round in a firm edge with an opalescent clarification of the extreme rim that gave the far-off confines a look of crystal.

But I had not stood longer than a minute gazing around me when I spied a gleam of canvas about a point on our weather-bow. I saw it under the curve of the forecourse that lay plain in sight under the lifted clew of the mainsail.

'A sail, Miss Temple.'

'Where?' she cried, with her manner full of fever on the instant. I pointed. 'Oh,' she exclaimed, bringing her hands together, 'if it should be the Indianan!'

But the captain was walking aft, and it was time to salute him.

'Good-morning, sir,' I said as I approached him with Miss Temple at my side. 'We have paused a moment to admire this very beautiful morning.—I perceive a sail right ahead, captain.'

It was a part of his destiny, I suppose, that he should stare hard at those who accosted him before answering. He carried his unwinking, dead black eye from my companion to me, and then stepped out of the shell of his mood of meditation as a bird might be hatched.

'Hope you slept pretty comfortably?'

'Yes; I passed a good night; and I am happy to know that Miss Temple rested well.'

'Which way is that ship going?' cried the girl, whose cheeks were flushed with impatience.

'She is not a ship, mem,' he answered; 'she is seemingly a big boat that's blowing along the same road as ourselves under a lug.'

The telescope lay on the skylight, and I pointed it. Sure enough, the sail was no ship, as I had first imagined, though the white square hovering upon the horizon exactly resembled the canvas of a large craft slowly climbing up the sea. I could readily distinguish a boat, apparently a ship's longboat, running before the wind under a lugsail; but she was as yet too distant to enable me to make out the figures of people aboard, considerable as were the magnifying powers of the glass I levelled at her.

'Only a boat?' cried Miss Temple, in accents of keen disappointment.

'What will a craft of that sort be doing in the middle of this wide sea?' said I.

'She may have gone adrift, as you did,' answered Captain Braine.

'Is it imaginable that she should be the corvette's cutter?' cried Miss Temple, straining her fine eyes, alight with conflicting emotion, at the object ahead.

'Oh, no,' said I. 'First of all, the cutter had no sail; next, yonder boat is three or four times bigger than she was; and then, even if she had a sail, I question if she could have run all this distance in the time from the spot she started from.'

I noticed whilst I spoke that Captain Braine watched me with a singular expression, and that his face slightly changed as to an emotion of relief when I had concluded my answer.

'The lady,' said he, 'is speaking of the man-of-war cutter that rowed ye aboard the wreck, and lost ye there?'

'Yes,' said I.

'How many of a crew?' he asked.

'Six men and a lieutenant; but the officer was drowned.'

He took the telescope from me, and brought it to bear upon the little sail over the bow, and kept it levelled for some moments. He then put the glass down, and said: 'Have you had any breakfast?'

'Not yet,' I answered.

He called through the skylight to Wilkins, and told him to put some biscuit and tea and cold meat upon the table.—'I have made my meal,'

said he, contriving one of his extraordinary bows as he addressed Miss Temple; 'and so, I hope, mem, you'll excuse my presence below. Eat hearty, both of ye, I beg. There's no call to stint yourselves, and I'm sorry I can't put anything more tempting afore ye, as Jack says.'

We at once descended, both of us being anxious to get the meal, such as it might be, over.

'Why is he repeatedly saying, "as Jack says?"' asked Miss Temple.

'Ah!' I exclaimed, 'and why does he stare so? Yet, on my word, he seems an exceedingly good-natured fellow. I assure you, we might have fallen into worse hands. No man could make a homeward-bound ship to rise up out of the sea or signal our whereabouts to the *Countess Ida* when she is leagues and leagues out of sight; but another captain might not have shown half the friendly concern this poor eccentric creature exhibits in our comfort.'

She agreed with me, but quickly dropped the subject as something distasteful, and spoke of her disappointment, and of the strangeness of meeting a small boat in the middle of such an ocean as we were sailing through. By some trick above my comprehension, she had contrived to smooth out her dress, inasmuch that a deal of its castaway aspect had left it. She had also manoeuvred in some fashion with the feather in her hat; and I told her, as she sat opposite me, that she looked as fresh as though she had just left her cabin in the *Indiaman*.

'Youth must always triumph,' I said, 'if it be but fairly treated. Sleep has made your former self dominant again; but I will reserve all my compliments until I am able to pull my hat off to you ashore and say good-bye.'

She shot a glance at me under her long fringes, but held her peace.

The tea was so vile that I called to Wilkins, who stood on the quarter-deck, to procure us some coffee if there were any aboard; and in a few minutes he returned with a sailor's hook-pot full of it from the galley. This Miss Temple seemed able to sip without a face of aversion. It vexed me to see her imperilling her delicate white teeth with the hard fare that was sheer fore-castle stuff, and bad at that; but it was not for me to give orders, nor was I willing to protract our sitting by inquiring if there was other food aboard. Besides, every hour in such weather as this might provide us with the opportunity we hungered for, to escape into some homeward-bound ship with a cabin capable of affording enduring entertainment.

We rose from the table, and regained the deck. The moment my head showed above the companion-way, the captain called to me hastily. There was a look of disorder in his countenance that immediately excited my wonder; there was the alacrity of fear in his manner; he could address me now without a prolonged stare and his usual tardy emergence of mind.

'Please, take this glass,' said he, thrusting the telescope into my hand; 'and look at that there boat, and tell me what you think.'

The smooth, swift sliding of the *Lady Blanche* over the level surface of sea that was running in fire and foam lines to the brushing of the merry breeze and the sparkling of the soaring sun, had closed us rapidly with the boat ahead since

Miss Temple and I left the deck to breakfast. The little fabric was now scarcely more than a mile on the bow, and the captain's glass, when I put it to my eye, brought her as close to me as if she were no farther off than our fore-castle. She was a large, carvel-built longboat; one of those round-bowed, broad-beamed structures which in the olden days used to stand in chocks betwixt a ship's foremast and galley, with often another boat stored inside of her, unless she was used to keep sheep or other live-stock in. She was deep in the water, and as much of her hull as was visible was of a dingy sallow white. She showed a broad square of dark old lug, before which she was running with some show of nimbleness. She seemed to be crowded with men, and even whilst I stood looking at her through the glass, I counted no less than twenty-seven persons. They were all looking our way, and though it was scarcely possible to define individual faces amid such a yellow huddle of countenances, I could yet manage to determine a prevailing piratic expression of the true sort, suggested not so much by the vagueness of swarthy cheek and shaggy brow as by the singularity of the fellows' apparel—the flapping sombrero, the red sash, the blue shirt, with other details—which but very faintly corresponded indeed with one's notion of the coarse homely attire of the merchant sailor.

Captain Braine's eyes were fixed upon me as I turned to him. 'What do you think of her, sir?' said he.

'I don't like the look of those fellows at all,' I answered. 'I would not mind making a bet that they are a portion of the crew of the privateering brig from whose hull you rescued us yesterday morning.'

'Just the idea that occurred to me,' he cried. He levelled the glass again. 'A boatful of rascals, sir. Armed to the teeth, I daresay, and on the lookout for some such a vessel as mine to seize and get away back to their own waters in. And yet, it is awful, too, to think that the creatures may be in want of water. What's to be done? I can't allow them to board; and I'm not going to heave to, to give 'em a chance of doing so.'

'We're overhauling them fast,' said I. 'Best plan perhaps, captain, will be to hail them as we slide past and ascertain their wants, if we can understand their lingo; and if they need water, there's nothing to be done but to send some adrift for them to pick up.—But for God's sake, sir, don't let them come aboard. They look as evil a lot of cut-throats as ever I saw; and besides the safety of our lives and of the ship, we have this lady to consider.'

Captain Braine listened to me with his eyes fixed upon the boat.

'She can't look on at this,' said he, as if thinking aloud; 'we should tow her under water at such a pace.—Yes!' he shouted, with a wild look coming into his face, 'if she attempts to sheer alongside, I'll give her the stem!' and springing with the agility of a monkey upon the rail, he grasped a backstay, and stood in a posture for hailing the boat as we swept past.

Forward, the seamen had quitted the jobs they were upon, and were staring open-mouthed from the fore-castle rail. I picked up the glass again to look at the crowd, and every face in the lens was

now as distinct as Miss Temple's who stood beside me. An uglier, more ferocious-looking set of men never stepped the deck of a picaroon. I had not the least doubt whatever that they were a portion of the crew of the brig. Indeed, I seemed to have some recollection of the boat, for I remembered, whilst examining the brig from the poop of the Indian, that I had been struck by the unusual size of her longboat, and that the colour of her was the sallow pea-soup tint of the fabric yonder. There were several chocolate-coloured faces amongst the little crowd; here and there, a coal-black countenance with a frequent glitter of earrings and gleam of greasy ringlets. Many of them eyed us over the low gunwale under the sharp of their hands; one stood erect on the thwart through which the mast was stepped, clasping the spar with his arm, and apparently waiting to hail us. The steersman watched us continuously, and now and again the boat's head would slightly fall off to a sneaking movement of the helm, as though to some notion of edging down upon us without attracting our observation. But the barque's keen stem was ripping through the water as the jaws of a pair of shears drive through a length of sailcloth. I had no fear of the boat hooking on; she would have to manoeuvre under our bows to do that, and it needed but a little twirl of the spokes of our wheel to drive her into staves and to send her people bobbing and drowning into our wake.

'Boat ahoy!' shouted the captain with such delivery of voice as I should have thought impossible in so narrow-shouldered a man.

'Yash! yash!' vociferated the fellow who clasped the mast, frantically brandishing his arms. 'Ve are sheepwreck—you veel take us—ve starve!'

The captain looked and hardly seemed to know what to say.

'How long have you been adrift?' he bawled.

The fellow, who wore a red nightcap, shook it till the tassel danced to the violent gestures of his head. He evidently did not understand the question. 'Take us!' he shrieked—'ve starve!'

The boat was now on the bow, within pistol-shot from the fore-castle rail.

'Mind your helm, Captain Braine,' I suddenly shouted, 'or she'll be aboard you!' for my young and, in those days, keen eyes had marked the action of the fellow who steered the boat, and even as I bawled out, the head of the little fabric swept round with a fellow in the bows flourishing a boathook, and others standing by ready to help him when he should have hooked on.

'Steady as she goes!' cried Captain Braine.

'Oh Mr Dugdale,' shrieked Miss Temple, 'they will get on board of us!'

The boat's head drove sheering alongside into our bow just forward of the fore-chain plates. I saw the fellow erect in her head fork out his boathook to catch hold.

'Let go!' roared a voice forward. The figure of Joe Wetherly overhung the rail, poising either an iron marline-spike or a belaying-pin, or some short bar of metal; this I saw. Then he hurled it at the moment that the boathook had caught a plate. The missile struck the man full on the head; he fell like a statue in the bottom of the boat, leaving the boathook swinging at the plate, and the boat herself grinding

past us as the barque, to the impulse of her great overhanging squares of studding-sail, swept onwards at some seven or eight knots in the hour.

It was their only boathook, and they were so crowded besides as to be in one another's road. I saw a dozen grimy paws extended to catch hold of the main-chain plates as the boat came bruising and groaning and washing past; but the iron bars were swept like smoke out of the wretches' frantic grip. Never shall I forget the picture the little fabric offered in the swift glimpse I caught of her as she glided past. The crowd in her, in their desperate efforts to catch hold of the sweeping projections in the barque's side, squirmed and surged and rose and fell like rags of meat stirred up in a boiling stewpot. Their cries, their yells, their Spanish oaths, the brandishings of their arms, the fury expressed in their malignant faces, the sudden uproar and crash of their one mast and sail by the fouling of it with our main-brace, all combine into a memory which is not to be expressed in words. I caught sight of a number of breakers in the bottom of the boat along with some bags, and was instinctively assured that they were lacking in neither food nor water. As the boat sped under the rail on which Captain Braine was standing, the fellow who had been at her helm, a brawny mulatto in a wide straw-hat, loose red shirt, and naked feet, suddenly whipped a pistol out of his breast, took aim at the skipper, and fired; and then, in a breath or two, the craft was astern, tumbling in the seething white of our wake, lessening into a toy even as you looked with half of her people getting the wreck of mast and rail inboard, and the rest of them furiously gesticulating at us.

Captain Braine stood on the rail watching them with an air of musing that was incredibly odd in the face of the wild excitement of the moment.

'Are you hurt?' I cried.

He turned slowly to survey me, then very leisurely dismounted from his perch, meanwhile continuing to gaze at me.

'No,' said he, after an interval during which I ran my eyes over him with anxiety, thinking to see blood or to behold him suddenly fall; 'it's all right. This is the fourth time I've been shot at in my life; and be my end what it will, it is certain I am not to perish by another man's bullet.—Rogues all, ha!' he continued, directing his dead black vision at the boat astern; 'they would have carried the little *Blanche*, and slit our throats. Just the sort of ship, sir, for the likes of their trade: the heels of a racehorse and the sober look of the honest marchantman.'

'They never could have held on with that boathook,' said I, struck more by the man's manner than his speech, strange as it was. 'I suppose they hoped to cling long enough to chuck a few of their beauties aboard us.—Well, Miss Temple, let us trust that we have now seen the very last of that confounded privateer brig and the gallant, good-looking chaps who stocked her.'

'When is all this going to end?' said she.

'Every man of them,' exclaimed the captain, 'will have had a firearm in his breast.'

'No doubt,' I answered; 'the vessel must have been handsomely furnished in that way to judge

by what we found remaining in the cabin of the wreck.'

'Were they starving, d'ye think?' he exclaimed with a sudden troubled manner, as he looked at the speck in our wake.

'I should say not,' said I; 'there were breakers in the bottom of the boat, and parcels resembling bread bags aft.'

'Thirst is a fearful thing at sea, sir,' said he, slowly; 'it's worse than hunger. Hunger, whilst it remains appetite, is agreeable; but the first sensation of thirst is a torture. I have known 'em both—I have known 'em both,' he added, with a melancholy shake of his head and a profound sigh; then bringing his unwinking stare to bear upon me, he exclaimed: 'Supposing that shot had taken effect, the *Lady Blanche* would now be without a master; and if you wasn't on board, she'd be without a navigator. Less than two sea-going heads to every ship *won't* do. I felt that truth when Chicken went, and I'm feeling of it every time I catch sight of that there man Lush.'—Miss Temple and I exchanged glances.—'Well,' said he, with one of his mirthless grins, 'I don't expect those privateersmen 'll trouble us any more;' and in his abrupt way he walked to the compass, and stood there looking alternately from it to the canvas.

A CORNER OF BRITTANY.

WHEN we put ourselves into the steamer at Southampton at eleven P.M. that fine night in August, we had fair hopes of a placid arrival at St Malo twelve hours later, and thoughts of a little French luncheon before our final destination was reached; but, *ehu!* one o'clock, two o'clock, next day found us wobbling, sick and sorry, in front of St Malo, gazing with unappreciative eyes on the bay, bristling with rocks and studded with islands. Nothing but inward miseries appealed to us; not the beautiful and picturesque old town; not the Hen and Chickens group of islets; not the lonely tomb of Chateaubriand on its desolate rock, iron-railed and cross-guarded. Neither the loveliness nor the dirtiness of St Malo moved us on that day, for when at last the tide allowed us to land, the fierce battle of the *douane* began; yelled at by porters, assailed by cab-drivers, shouldered aside by officials, for a long hour we waited before our luggage was allowed to wear the mystic white chalk-mark which freed it from further inspection.

The kind landlady of the house, or rather *appartement*, which we have taken here, ten miles from St Malo, had written to say that her farmer, with his *char-à-banc*, would await our arrival; so for him and his conveyance we looked, for by this time all thoughts of the little *déjeuner* had been abandoned, as it would put the shelter and rest for which we longed at a greater distance; and who can eat when *mal de mer* still reigns? Too low for pride, too abject for despair, too stultified for surprise, we behold our chariot, a common, roughly-painted haycart, provided with movable, sometimes too movable, benches; the grilled

back let down so as to be almost level with the floor of the wagon, and our luggage was piled up in it, and then we ourselves got in, and the two hours' drive began. Our coachman wore a blue blouse, full at the throat, loose below the waist. His whip was of string, so also was the harness. Did it break? Yes, frequently; but then the farmer got down and tied it together again. We drove past *Parramée*, with its gay casino and beautiful sands, through St Coulomb, whose church clock has not gone for twenty years. And why should it go? What need of a clock have they? ask its inhabitants. They get up when they wake, eat when they are hungry, and go to sleep when they have done their work. This good, wholesome, Stock Exchange sort of rule gives the key to much that passes in this breezy, healthy, unhurried country of the bright blue sky. Man dominates, not Time.

We passed through a little wood where, in the Great Revolution, many hundreds of poor refugees were concealed. The rich earth is richer for their graves; for dead and living were in close proximity, and the last soon became the first.

When the farmer urged the slow horse, the 'Camille'—with whom we became so intimately acquainted later on—to an attempt at speed, we felt that our voyaging for the time being was over; and when the *Grand Château* was pointed out, we rejoiced greatly, and uttered no disclaimer as to its title, but got down gratefully before the bleached, flat-faced house, whose long white shutters were tightly pinioned back at the side of each door and window. It was not exactly pretty, this hundred-and-sixty years' old French farmhouse; but the door, which opened outwards, showed a very large square central room, in which we were received with utmost courtesy and kindness by Madame our landlady, and every available relation of hers. The prettiest possible little repast awaited us; but no cheery teapot gratified the eyes of the ladies of our party; that had to be added by them later on. The whole room was decorated with flowers and ribbons. The furniture was covered with dainty frilled white; and the freshness and cleanliness of everything was delightful. Then kind Monsieur L— signified his being at our disposal if we wished to see our other rooms, and we went with him into the kitchen, where our *cuisinière* Marie, of the smiling face and bolster figure, waited to welcome us. At one end of the kitchen was a large square cupboard. Monsieur L— opened it, and a rope thick as an arm and knotted at intervals swung out. Monsieur L— prayed us to ascend. Too weary to discern, in the semi-darkness, that the cupboard concealed a spiral staircase as well as the knotted rope, it was with many a wild inward tremor, with many a memory of 'Curfew shall not ring to-night' that we grasped the rope. But though 'the way up to my chamber was up a winding stair,' still, staircase there was. Not hand over hand was the ascent accomplished. It was a bad 'getting up stairs;' whilst for the descent, *facilis est*, &c.

The four large airy bedrooms were uncarpeted, save for occasional rugs, but sweet and clean, and contained a very comfortable bed, with pretty draperies, sweet semi-bleached linen sheets, and square monogram-embroidered pillows, reposing outside, and bashfully covered with lace-trimmed squares. These are the principal rooms, and were ours to have and to hold as long as we liked. The inferior rooms, with a separate entrance, were tenanted by the farmer and his family. The small courtyard in front, the earth of which was white with shells, contained a poultry-run, &c.; the pretty tufted black and white Houdan cocks and hens were quite ornamental. Fields and orchards were all about us. We looked out on a mass of *blé noir* (rye), growing under apple and pear trees. With this we made subsequent acquaintance in the form of the delicious *galettes* which Marie sent to table. She told us piles of the tempting-looking pancakes thus made were served out to the farm-labourers at harvest-time. Truly, we were pleased with our surroundings; and if bright brisk air, a country beautiful and wind-swept by ocean breezes, and a gashed and serrated coast, be charming, then indeed is Cancale full of charms.

In our unceiled rooms, big beams, twelve inches square, ran from back to front, crossed by smaller ones from side to side. In our kitchen, various fires cooked our modest repasts. There was a tiny stove, supplemented by a wood-fire on the hearth; also by a bucket of charcoal, set in the middle of the floor; and also by a little closed-in portable oven, standing only fourteen inches high. In this last reposed one of the pair of fowls in which we now and then indulged; whilst the stove roasted the other, no one receptacle being large enough to cook the two together. These fowls were stuffed with prunes and raisins; and very good they were. The food-supply was sufficient; ample, indeed, but did not admit of great variety. Meat was cheap, but a trifle coarse. We gradually drifted down to excellent *biftecks*, veal and lamb, both very good; but the lamb of Brittany is larger than Southdown mutton. Fish is plentiful; but the audacity of the demands of the fishwomen 'who had come all this long way in the hope of pleasing Madame,' was so great, that our refusal to entertain exorbitant prices was firm, and led to our being obliged to do without any for a few days, as we were not energetic enough to attend the seven A.M. fish-market. Fruit and vegetables were abundant and delicious; the apricots looked the incarnation of sunlight.

Cancale is famous for its oysters; square fenced-in beds of them may be seen at low tide in the bay 'La Houle.' Unlovely they appear in their muddy parks; but they are excellent, albeit 'trailing no clouds of glory do they come.' Hideous are the low flat wood-fenced beds in which they are brought up, and which you are invited to inspect by women, who, dabbling in the mud, hire out clumsy overshoes to render your walk to them less offensive. The baby oysters live far from shore—those ready for consumption close to it; between these two grades all stages of growth may be found. It is emphatically a fishing village. The coming in or going out of the boats is a sight to be remembered; those boats in that bay, lying at peace

under the light of the moon, a sight never to be forgotten.

Women seemed to do most of the work; men were scarce, for fifteen hundred of them were in far-off 'Terre Neuf' (Newfoundland). When it was rumoured about that we had arrived, we, the only English in the place, we had eager inquiries as to whether St Pierre (in Newfoundland) was not quite close to England! so far off do both countries equally appear to this somewhat stationary population. In February the male inhabitants go to St Pierre, only returning to wives and sweethearts in October; for this reason marriages are greatly more numerous in winter than at any other time. 'The men are here then, and there is not so much work to be done.' The marriages generally take place early in the day; and the wedding party, two and two, promenade the town, headed by the bride and bridegroom. The pretty girl whom we saw, leaning on the arm of her newly-acquired husband, was in black silk—black is the gala dress here—with a mass of white in front, a white veil with a wreath of orange blossoms, and an immense bouquet—all the gift of the jaunty bridegroom, who smilingly smoked a gay cigarette. It was pleasant to hear that this was a love-match; the girl had no dot; but her *fiancé* would not let that stand in the way, and himself provided wedding-feast and wedding-clothes.

Cancale boasts a fine church, marvellous as to size and solidity for so small a place; but it is not yet mellowed by age. A ship or two hangs from the roof, gaily decked out with flags—a votive offering from some sailor on the eve of a voyage, or of some sailor's wife in hope of her husband's speedy and favourable return. On Sundays the church is filled to overflowing, and never once, on other days, did we enter it without finding reverent peasant worshippers. At *le Verger*, a sandy beach about two miles off, is another small, very pretty 'Church of the Virgin Mary.' It is built right on the sands, and is supposed to commemorate a shipwreck which took place there a thousand years ago. This is, par excellence, the mariners' church, and hither, barefoot, walk the sailors on their return from Terre Neuf, in winter, to testify gratitude if a favourable voyage has been granted. Hither, too, on the 15th of August, the day of the 'Fête de Marie,' came all Cancale. A long procession was formed of priests and Sisters, and 'Filles de Marie' and 'Enfants de Marie,' and boys as choristers and as miniature seamen. The whole road was gay with fluttering surplices, and the air melodious with 'Ave, Ave, Maria.'

The neat appearance of the peasants was striking; all are well shod, and walk well; pretty faces abound; the universal black dress is always fresh; and the black shawl, be it new or old, is put on with the utmost care. This universal and simple costume must surely save time and money, as well as prevent those outrages of colour universal in a country where 'motley's the only wear.' The thrifty wardrobe can be replenished with ease when fashions continue the same year after year, and no 'favourite colour this season' has to be aspired to and obtained in some sorry material. Every peasant at her wedding has a large mahogany or rosewood *armoire* or wardrobe in which to keep her

clothes, and these shining presses reflect the loving labour spent on them. A tall old-fashioned clock, too, often stands by the *armoire*; the brass-work of some is beautiful.

Peaceful harvesting operations went on all round us: we saw the old-fashioned flail, wielded by women as well as men. In many places we saw a horse going round and round, forming, as it were, the outer circle of a huge wheel, on the centre of which stood a blue-bloused man, urging on his steed with 'Hui donc!' 'Va-t-on,' &c., &c. They were thrashing out the corn. But not so pleasant was it to see that unfortunate horse who, to achieve the same end, mounted a terrible tread-mill, tied up to the summit by a short rope; stoppage in that weary task would lead to the breaking of his neck. Evidently, no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty obtains in Brittany; the cats and dogs are a wretched half-starved race, flying from the voice or touch of man.

We alone in Cancale were English; we alone spoke our language; echoes from the great home-country reached us deadened by a day's distance; but we were satisfied, 'wishing for nothing, quite content with sunshine and sweet air.' These we had in abundance. Fresh sea-breezes swept the land, and carried away the odours of the undrained streets; and we boiled and filtered our drinking-water, lay down to rest in peace, and rose to remember with gratitude that there was but one post a day, and very late in the day too.

During our seven weeks' stay we saw but one case of drunkenness. Bunches of mistletoe over the doorways of the cafés denoted that cider was there sold. It is the great drink of the country, and not a ferocious tipple.

We took many a drive in the farmer's cart, passing the irregular picturesque fields, and watched the broad-leaved tobacco plant come to perfection. It was at last gathered, and hung up in long straight strips under extempore sheds, or beneath trees, gradually turning a genial brown. Great care has to be exercised in the drying, which must be neither too quick nor too slow; so it is carefully sheltered from heat or damp. Acres of this plant grow all about. It is never allowed to go to seed, lest a free supply of it should get into the hands of the people, to whom Government sells the seed, paying the grower twopence-halfpenny for every pound delivered. During the time of its growth, strictest watch over it is kept by Government inspectors, who count every plant and every leaf. Any deficiency in the producible quantity is taxed with a fine of sixteen francs a pound.

The flora of this corner of Brittany is exquisite: honeysuckle, white, pink, lemon-coloured, hangs from the hedges; the ground is yellow with toad-flax and bedstraw; purple loosestrife abounds, rare ladies' tresses, orchids are beneath your feet, whilst ferns spring up everywhere. The country walks all round are practically inexhaustible, whilst the sea-border leaves nothing to be desired. At every turn of the rugged coast you come upon some new little bay—'ports,' as they are called—each differing in character, and each full of charm, from Port Briac—where we take daily baths, untroubled by bathing-machines, and finding excellent dressing-rooms in the rocks—to Port Guimorais, with its small cave and its passionate

waves. Port Mer abounds with shells, and with the lovely blue sea-thistle or 'chardon'; Port Verger has shifting sands, and its chapel; Port Guesclin is fortified, and has a beautiful double bay.

Everywhere one comes across wayside stone crosses, worn and rounded by age. Here and there, notably in Port La Houle, a crucifix may be seen, gigantic in size—a story of infinite love and sorrow, carved in wood.

For excursions, St Malo and St Servan, with their cathedrals and tempting shops, are near; so also Parramée, Dinard, Dinan, with its picturesque approach up the Rance. We drove, too, to Dol, taking care to go there on Saturday, market-day, when a variety of costumes may be seen amongst the peasants. The quaint cathedral is of itself worth a day's march, and is, we are told, unique. Then there is world-famous Mont St Michel, built, so the legend runs, by angelic direction. It was used first as a monastery, then as a state prison; a marvellous erection. How were those huge slabs of stone, those wonderful pillars, those great arches, brought and built up here, miles and miles from civilisation, on a little island—now connected with the mainland by a causeway—which rears itself straight up from the sea? It claims kindred with our Cornish St Michael's Mount, to which it bears a strong resemblance, owning the same godfather. To see this marvellous place, it is well to sleep there for a night; it deserves two days for exploration. Its chapel is beautiful, its *oubliettes* horrible. Here you are shown the arch which formed the back of the iron cage in which perished the unfortunate Dubourg, a political prisoner. French gaiety and ferocity seem to meet when a pretty woman smilingly offers you a photograph of his rat-eaten body and other similar horrors. Amongst them, you may be struck by the calm refined *personnel* of the 'Man with the Iron Mask' with his half-veiled face. As to the authenticity of these portraits, who can vouch for, who deny it?

FORGET-ME-NOT.

CHAPTER II.

THERE are some of us born and reared far enough beyond the contaminating influences of evil, who, nevertheless, take so naturally to rascality, that one is prone to ask a question as to whether it is not the outcome of some hereditary taint or mental disease. To this aberrant class, Anthony Wingate, late of the Queen's Own Scarlets, naturally belonged.

Commencing a promising career with every advantage conferred by birth, training, and education, to say nothing of the possession of a considerable fortune, he had quickly qualified himself for a prominent position amongst those cavaliers of fortune who hover on the debatable land between acknowledged vice and apparent respectability. In the language of certain contemporaries, he had once been a pigeon before his callow plumage had been stripped, and it became necessary to lay out his dearly-bought experience in the character of a hawk. Five years of army

life had sufficed to dissipate a handsome patrimony; five years of racing and gambling, with their concomitant vices, at the end of which he awoke to find himself with an empty purse, and a large and varied assortment of worldly knowledge. Up to this point, he had merely been regarded as a companion to be avoided; as yet, nothing absolutely dishonourable had been laid to his charge, only that common report stated that Anthony Wingate was 'in difficulties'; and unless he and his bosom friend Chris Ashton made a radical change, the Scarlets would speedily have cause to mourn their irreparable defection.

But, unfortunately, neither of them contemplated so desirable a consummation. In every regiment there are always one or two fast young 'subs' with a passion for *écarté* and unlimited loo, and who have no objection to paying for that enviable knowledge. For a time this pleasant condition of affairs lasted, till at length the crash came. One young officer, more astute than the rest, detected the cheats, and promptly laid the matter before his brothers-in-arms. There was no very grave scandal, nothing nearly so bad as Ashton had suggested to Winchester, only that Captains Wingate and Ashton resigned their commissions, and their place knew them no more. There was a whisper of a forged bill, some hint of a prosecution, known only to the astute sub and his elder brother and adviser-in-chief, Lord Bearhaven, and to Vere Dene, Ashton's sister, who is reported to have gone down on her knees to his lordship and implored him to stay the proceedings. How far this was true, and how Vere Dene came to change her name, we shall learn presently. But that there was a forged bill there can be no doubt, for Wingate had stolen it from Winchester's studio while visiting Ashton, after the crash came; and, moreover, he was using it now in a manner calculated to impress upon Ashton the absolute necessity of becoming the greater scoundrel's tool and accomplice. Since that fatal day when he had flown to careless bohemian Jack Winchester with the story of his shame, and a fervid petition to the latter to beg, borrow, or steal the money necessary to redeem the fictitious acceptance bearing Bearhaven's name, he had not seen his sister, though she would cheerfully have laid down all her fortune to save him. But all the manhood within him was not quite dead, and he shrank, as weak natures will, from a painful interview. Winchester had redeemed the bill, and Wingate had purloined it.

Winchester had been brought up under the same roof as Vere Ashton, by the same prim puritanical relative, who would hold up her hands in horror at his boyish escapades, and predict future evil to arise from the lad's artistic passion. It was the old story of the flint and steel, fire and water; so, chafed at length by Miss Winchester's cold frigidity, he had shaken the

dust from his feet, and vowed he would never return until he could bring fame and fortune in his train. There was a tender parting between the future Raphael and his girlish admirer under the shadow of the beeches, a solemn interchange of sentiments, and Jack Winchester started off to conquer the world with a heart as light and unburdened as his pocket.

But man proposes. Vere's mother had been the only daughter of a wealthy *virtuoso*, who had literally turned his only daughter out of doors when she had dared to consult her own wishes in the choice of a husband; and for years, long years after Vere and Chris had lost both parents, he made no sign. Then the world read that Vavasour Dene was dead, and had left the whole of his immense fortune to his grandchildren; three-fourths to Vere on condition that she assumed the name of Dene, and the remainder to Chris, because, so the will ran, he was the son of his mother. Presently, Winchester, leading a jolly bohemian existence in Rome, heard the news, and decided, in the cynical fashion of the hour, that Vere would speedily forget him now. And so they drifted gradually apart. Winchester had been thoughtless, careless, and extravagant; living from hand to mouth, in affluence one day, in poverty another; but he was not without self-respect, and he had never been guilty of a dishonourable action. He hated Wingate with all the rancour a naturally generous nature was capable of feeling, and set his teeth close as he listened.

'Of course it was only a matter of time to come to this,' he said. 'Well, of all the abandoned scoundrels! And that man once had the audacity to make love to Vere, you say? I wish I had known before.'

'That was a long time ago,' Ashton replied; 'before—before we left the army, when you were in Rome. Remember, Wingate was a very different man, in a very different position then. Do you suppose that he knows whose place it is that he contemplates?'—

'Knows! of course he knows.—Now listen to me, Chris, my boy, and answer me truthfully. I believe, yes, I do, that if you had a chance you would end this miserable life. You say you are in Wingate's power. What I want to know is whether he carries that precious paper about with him?'—

'Always, always, Jack. With that he can compel me to anything; the only wonder is that I have never forced it from him before now. Still, I do not see what that has to do with the matter.'

Winchester smoked in profound silence for a time, ruminating deeply over a scheme which had commenced to shape itself in his ready brain. 'I don't suppose you do understand,' he said dogmatically. 'Do you think if I were to see Vere she would acknowledge me, knowing who I am?'

For answer Ashton laughed almost gaily. 'Your modesty is refreshing. Do you think she has forgotten you, and the old days at Rose Bank? Never! There are better men than you; handsomer, cleverer by far; she meets

daily good men and true, who would love her for her sweet self alone. She is waiting for you, she will wait for you till the end of time. Whatever her faults may be, Vere does not forget.'

A dull red flush mounted to the listener's cheeks, a passionate warmth flooded his heart almost to overflowing; but even the quick sanguineness of his mercurial disposition could not grasp the roseate vision in its entirety. Its very contemplation was too dangerous for ordinary peace of mind.

'One more thing I wish to know,' said he, reverting doggedly to the original topic. 'Of course the dainty Wingate does not intend to soil his fingers by such an act as vulgar burglary. Who is the meaner rascal?'

'So far as I can gather, a neighbour of ours, a very superior workman, I am told, who is suffering from an eclipse of fortune at present. The gentleman's name is Chivers—Benjamin Chivers. Is the name familiar?'

'Why, yes,' Winchester answered dryly, 'which is merely what, for a better word, we must term another coincidence. The fellow has a most respectable wife and three children, who are distinguished from the other waifs in the street by a conspicuous absence of dirt. I thought I recognised the fellow's face.'

'Recognised his face? Have you seen him, then?'

Winchester gave a brief outline of his interview with the individual he had chanced to encounter in Arlington Street. A little circumstance in which one day he had been instrumental in saving a diminutive Chivers from con-dign chastisement had recalled the ex-convict's face to his recollection. Perhaps—but the hope was a wild one—a little judicious kindness, and a delicate hint at the late charitable demonstration, might sufficiently soften the thief's heart and cause him to betray Wingate's plans. That they would not be confided entirely to Ashton he was perfectly aware, and that the meaner confederate had been kept in want of funds by his chief the fact of his begging from a stranger amply testified.

'Which only shows you that truth is stranger than fiction,' said he, as he rose to his feet and donned his hat. 'If I only dared to see her; and even then she might—but I am dreaming. However, we will make a bold bid for freedom. And now you can amuse yourself by setting out the Queen Anne silver and the priceless Dresden for supper;' saying which, he felt his way down the creaky stairs into the street below.

The ten days succeeding the night upon which this important conversation was held were so hot that even Ashton, much as he shrank from showing himself out of doors in the daytime, could bear the oppressive warmth no longer, and had rambled away through Kennington Park Road, even as far as Clapham Common, in his desire to breathe a little clear fresh air. Winchester, tied to his easel by a commission which, if not much, meant at least board and lodging, looked at the blazing sky and shook his head longingly.

Despite the oppressive overpowering heat, the artist worked steadily on for the next three hours. There was less noise than usual in the street below, a temporary quiet in which Winchester

inwardly rejoiced. At the end of this time he rose and stretched himself, with the comfortable feeling of a man who has earned a temporary rest. In the easy abandon of shirt sleeves he leant out of the window, contemplating the limited horizon of life presented to his view. There were the usual complement of children indulging in some juvenile amusement, in which some broken pieces of platter and oyster shells formed an important item, and in this recreation Winchester, who had, like most warm-hearted men, a tender feeling towards children, became deeply engrossed. One or two street hawkers passed on crying their wares, and presently round the corner there came the unmistakable figure of a lady, followed by a servant in undress livery, bearing a hamper in his arms, a burden which, from the expression of his face, he by no means cared for or enjoyed.

'Some fashionable doing the Lady Bountiful,' Winchester murmured. 'Anyway, she has plenty of pluck to venture here. If she was a relation of mine'—

He stopped abruptly and stared in blank amazement, for there was no mistaking the tall figure and graceful carriage of Vere Dene. She passed directly under him, and entered a house a little lower down the street with the air of one who was no stranger to the locality. In passing the group of children, she paused for a moment, and selecting one or two of the cleanest, divided between them the contents of a paper parcel she carried.

Directly she had disappeared, a free fight for the spoils ensued. The interested spectator waited a moment to see which way the battle was going, and then hurried down the stairs and out into the street towards the combatants. The presence of the new ally was sorely needed. The three representatives of the house of Chivers were faring sorely in the hands of the common foe. In that commonwealth all signs of favour were sternly discountenanced.

'What do you mean by that?' Winchester demanded, just in time to save the whole of the precious sweetmeats. 'Don't you know it is stealing, you great girls, to rob those poor little children?'

'They don't mean it, bless you,' said a voice at the mediator's elbow; 'and they don't know any better. It's part of their nature, that's wot it is.'

Winchester turned round, and encountered the thickset form and sullen features of his Arlington Street acquaintance. As their eyes met, those of Chivers fell, and he muttered some incoherent form of thanks and acknowledgment for the past service. Presently he went on to explain.

'You see, my wife is better brought up than most of them about here, and she do try to keep the childer neat and tidy; and that makes the others jealous. They ain't been so smart lately,' he continued, with a glance half kindly, half shameful, at his now smiling offspring, 'cause mother has been poorly lately, and I've been out o' luck too.'

In spite of his shamefaced manner and the furtive look common to every criminal, there was something in the man's blunt candour that appealed to Winchester's better feelings. Besides, knowing something of the ex-convict and his

doubtful connection with Wingate, it was to his interest to conciliate his companion with a view to possible future advantage.

'It must be a miserable life, yours,' he said not unkindly. 'Better, far better, try something honest. You will not regret it by-and-by.'

'Honest, sir! Would to heaven I could get the chance! You are a gentleman; I can see that, though you do live here; and know what misfortune is. If I could only speak with you and get your advice. You have been kind to me, and good to my poor little ones, and I'm—I'm not ungrateful. If I could help you'—

Winchester laid his hand upon his companion's shoulder with his most winning manner. He began to feel hopeful. 'You can help me a great deal,' said he; 'come up to my room and talk the matter over.'

It was a very ordinary tale to which he had to listen.

'I was a carpenter and joiner, with a fair knowledge of locksmith's work, before I came to London. I was married just before then, and came up here thinking to better myself. It wasn't long before I wished myself back at home. I did get some work at last, such as it was, a day here and a day there; till I became sick and tired of it, and ready for anything almost. I needn't tell you how I got with a set of loose companions, and how I was persuaded to join them. . . . I got twelve months, and only came out ten weeks ago. I have tried to be honest. But it's no use, what with one temptation and another.'

'And so you have determined to try your hand again. You run all the risk, and your gentlemanly friend gets all the plunder.'

It was a bold stroke on Winchester's part; but the success was never for a moment in doubt. Chivers's coarse features relaxed into a perfect apathy of terror. He looked at the speaker in speechless terror and emotion.

'We will waive that for the present,' Winchester continued. 'What I wish to know is how you have contrived to live for the past ten weeks?'

'I was coming to that, sir, when you stopped me. You see, when the trouble came, my poor wife didn't care to let her friends know of the disgrace, and tried hard to keep herself for a time. But illness came too, and she and the little ones were well-nigh starving. Mary, my wife, sir, remembered once that she was in service with an old lady whose niece came into a large fortune. Well, she just wrote to her and told her everything. And what do you think that blessed young creature does? Why, comes straight down here into this den of a place and brings a whole lot of dainty things along. And that's the very lady as is up in my bit of a room at this very minute.'

'I am quite aware of that,' said Winchester quietly. 'Miss Dene, as she is called now, and myself are old friends. I remember everything now. Your wife was once a housemaid at Rose Bank; and you are the son of old David Chivers, who kept the blacksmith's shop at Weston village. —Ben, do you ever remember being caught bird-nesting in Squire Lechmere's preserves with a ne'er-do-well fellow called Jack Winchester?'

For answer, Chivers burst into tears. Pres-

ently, after wiping his eyes with the tattered fur cap, he ventured to raise his eyes to his host. 'You don't mean to say it's Mr Winchester?' he asked brokenly.

'Indeed, I am ashamed to say it is. This world of ours is a very small place, Ben, and this is a very strange situation for you and me to meet. But before we begin to say anything touching old times, there is something serious to be discussed between us. Remember, you are altogether in my hands. I might have waited my opportunity and caught you red-handed. Don't ask me for a moment what is my authority, but tell me'—and here the speaker bent forward, dropping his voice to an impressive whisper—'everything about the Arlington Street robbery you have planned with that scoundrel Wingate.'

Once more the old look of frightened terror passed like a spasm across the convict's heavy features. But taking heart of grace from Winchester's benign expression, he, after a long pause, proceeded.

'I don't know how he found me out, or why he came to tempt me—not that I required much of that either. It seemed all simple enough, and I was very short of money just then, and desperate-like, though I won't make any excuse. I don't know all the plans; I don't know yet whose house'—

'Whose house you are going to rob,' Winchester interrupted with a thrill of exultation at his heart. 'Then I will tell you as an additional reason why you should make a clean breast of it. Perhaps you may not know that Miss Dene lives in Arlington Street; and that Miss Dene, whose name, I see, puzzles you, is Miss Ashton, once of Rose Bank?'

'I didn't know,' Chivers exclaimed with sudden interest. 'If it is the same'—

'It is the same. She changed her name when she inherited her grandfather's fortune. Come! you know enough of Wingate's plans to be able to tell me if No. 281 Arlington Street is the house?'

'As sure as I am a living man, it is,' said Chivers solemnly. '—Mr Winchester, I have been bad; I was on the road to be worse; but if I did this, I should be the most miserable scoundrel alive. If you want to know everything, if you want me to give it up this minute'—

'I want to know everything, and I certainly do not want you to give it up this minute. You must continue with Wingate as if you are still his confederate. And of this interview not a word. I think, I really think that this will prove to be the best day's work you have ever done.'

Chivers answered nothing, but drew from a pocket a greasy scrap of paper cut from a cheap society paper, and placed it in Winchester's hand. As far as he could discern, the paragraph ran as follows:

'The delicate and refined fancy of a "jewel ball," designed by the Marchioness of Hurlingham, will be the means of displaying to an admiring world the finest gems of which our aristocracy can boast. Starr and Fortiter, *et hoc genus omne*, are busy setting and polishing for the important event, not the least valuable *parure* of brilliants in their hands being those of Miss Dene, the lovely Arlington Street heiress, who,

rumour says, intends to personify diamonds. Half a century ago the *Vere* diamonds had become quite a household word. Certainly they never had a more lovely mistress to display their matchless beauty.'

'That,' explained the penitent criminal in a hoarse whisper, 'is about all I know at present. But if I made a guess, I should say it would be the night after the ball.'

FORTUNES IN OLD FURNITURE.

ACCIDENT has from time to time revealed many treasures hidden away in various countries during the troubles of war. It would be a lucky find, could one unearth the treasure-chests of the Imperial army, said to have been buried in Spain during the Peninsular War, or those along Napoleon's line of retreat from the Beresina.

But even the more prosaic details of ordinary life are occasionally enlivened by some little romance of accidental discovery of wealth in old pieces of furniture picked up, perhaps, at an auction. The fortunate finders under consideration have all had reasons to rejoice over the possession of oak-chests and ancient cabinets. One does not usually associate anything very valuable or curious with charitable institutions, yet in the almshouses at Wells an interesting discovery of more than a thousand original documents was made in an old oak-chest. Some of these documents dated back to the thirteenth century, and many of their seals were in a wonderful state of preservation.

A few years ago a gentleman bought a cabinet at a saleroom for five shillings. This piece of furniture was put on one side, unexamined for some time. After the lapse of about two years, the owner agreed to sell it to a purchaser—anxious to buy a cabinet of the kind—for just double the sum he had paid for it. With this intention he took it out of the corner where it had been standing, in order to dust it. He pulled out a drawer, and discovered that it was shorter than the hole into which it fitted, and there was a bundle of what at first looked like five-pound notes inside. On taking them out, he found there were two bundles, one containing fourteen one-hundred-pound notes, and the other twenty-six notes, also of one hundred pounds apiece. They proved to have been lost twenty years ago by a gentleman in London, to whose representative the money was restored, and the finder rewarded.

It is not so satisfactory to the discoverer of hidden wealth when he has to refund his suddenly-acquired treasure to the rightful owner, as happened also in the next case. A carpenter not long since in Vienna received from the wife of a tailor an old chest of drawers to be repaired. On examining the back, he discovered a secret drawer in which were several rolls of paper. These proved to be various bonds and shares, all with their coupons attached. The finder at once

honestly deposited these valuable papers with the Commissary of Police. It appeared that the former owner had died suddenly, and as he was a parsimonious man, his relatives were not a little surprised to find that he had only left a small amount of property. He kept his savings in a secret drawer, which he had not mentioned to any one. As he died without making a will, nothing was known of this hidden treasure, the value of which amounted to over ten thousand florins. The chest of drawers passed to the next of kin.

Another interesting discovery is said to have been made by the executors of the late hereditary Princess Caroline of Denmark. An old chest, which, like the oaken one in the mournful ballad, 'had long been hid,' was found amongst the miscellaneous curiosities of a lumber-room. Not even the oldest servant remembered ever having seen it opened; and as no keys were found which fitted the lock, the lid was forced, when, to the surprise of every one, the box was found to contain a collection of rich furs, loose brilliants, pearl and diamond necklaces, velvets, pieces of richly-embroidered satin, canes and riding-whips with handles of beautifully-chiselled gold or silver inlaid with precious stones, gold cups—in short, a quantity of valuables worth many thousands of pounds. Apparently the existence of this treasure had been entirely forgotten by the late Princess. Doubtless the secrets revealed by such bureaux would be considered of much greater importance by most finders than any divulged by political cabinets.

An old oak-chest which was bought for four shillings in Derbyshire turned out to be worth a great deal more money even from its appearance, for it was very old, clumsy, and nicely carved. The purchaser was still better pleased with his bargain when he found a secret drawer in the bottom of the chest and forty spade guineas in the secret drawer. With the gold was a memorandum written in faded ink; it was to this effect: 'When my uncle Brown gave me fifty guineas at Christmas, as a present for waiting on him during his illness.—ANNE L—, 1798.' Of this reward for the lady's attention to her kinsman she had spent but ten guineas. The rest lay for sixty-five years untouched in her desk, while the world so strangely altered from the slow old days to the bustle and hurry of modern times. On the old lady's death, the husband of her niece became the possessor of her goods, and it appears that he sold the chest. As the chest had been out of the original owner's keeping for nine years, it was legally decided that the guineas belonged to the gentleman who bought them and the chest for four shillings.

To collectors of bric-à-brac there is a charm of old associations with people now forgotten—a sentimental motive—which will not be denied by collectors who do not merely follow a fashion, but love to fill their houses with curious waifs of time and mementoes of different ages.

But though sentiment is powerful, the influence of mammon is greater, and often makes buyers of bureaux, cabinets, chests, and such-like, examine them carefully in hopes of finding fortunes in secret drawers. But whatever motive may actuate the buyers of old oak or mahogany, we fear that little of the furniture of this Victorian

age will ever be purchased in the future for similar reasons, because it would crumble into fragments long before time had stamped it as an antique.

HUMOUR AT SCHOOL.

BY H. J. BARKER.

THE fund of ingenuousness and humour locked up within the four walls of an ordinary day-school is practically inexhaustible. The school-room walls, indeed, remain the same; but the generations of children—like a stream speeding betwixt its banks—are ever shifting and changing and disappearing, and each juvenile generation affords its sure quota of amusement.

Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn.

Thus, it is no great task for me to cull a number of interesting specimens—both oral and script—from my examinational notebook.

Questions in geography, based upon 'boring a hole through the middle of the earth,' are very favourite ones with examiners in testing the earth-knowledge of the lower classes of a school. Such questions are put with the special object of eliciting whether the children have exact and abiding notions of the size and shape of the earth. A certain examiner put the favourite question in this form: 'If I made a hole right through the centre of the earth where should I come out?' And one little lad, whose wit was readier than his geographical knowledge, and who was quite above such commonplace answers as 'Australia' or 'the Antipodes,' promptly replied, 'Out at the *hole*, mester!'

I may mention that when I related this anecdote in my lecture on 'Very Original English' in the theatre of the Birkbeck Institution, London, it caused such a spontaneous outburst of applause that I felt regret that the inspector and the juvenile prodigy were not both present to hear it.

The following literary selection is from a scholar's exercise on 'Governments.' With the exception of the introductory paragraph, which is of an ordinary character, I give the lad's complete effusion:

'It is not proper to think that the Governments of all countrys are alike. It may surprise your fathers and mothers to learn that we read in our books that there are many kinds of Governments. Five or Six I can count. In Persia the people call the Shah a Desspot. And your fathers and mothers will say that he deserves it. Why, if a man does anything wrong as not to please him, the Desspot has only to say, "Cut his head off." And the police does it. Or if the Desspot asks a woman to be one of his wives, and she says, "I will not marry you," he only says, "Cut her head off." And the police does it. But when this man who thinks as he is a king, comes to England, he cant do it. My mother remembers him once coming, and she says as he had to behave hisself, whether he liked it or not.

'In France, they have not now a king. Only a man as they choose for a Government, called a Prezident. In our reading-books it tells you a lot about this country, only I can never think of it. Wives plough in the fields, it says, and the poor boys and girls have not got no English home. The men are too fond of Governments, and they have had more of them than any other country nearly. Napolien was one, but there was lots of others. The city of Paris looks the finest place you ever see. There is a river runs straight up the middle, and lots of bridges drawn right across, and places sticking up, and bits of people walking by the side of the water. The Government this year is Prezident. These Prezidents have got queer names, but they are not kings nor Desspots.

'Our country has a Queen who cant do anything but what she ought to. She has been at the Government for nearly fifty years, and still she looks nice. Also Georges I., II., III., and IV., but there was VIII. Henrys. There is also houses called the Houses of Parliament. One of these is full of Lords, called the House of Lords, but the other is only built for them gentlemen as perhaps you have seen some of them, and it is called the House of Commons. No gentleman can get in there unless they know as he can make laws. But the Queen has to look them over, and see as they are made right. These Commons are called Conservatives and Liberals, and they try and hinder one another as much as they can. They sometimes have sides, and then you see it on the placards, and you can hear men and your fathers a talking and quarrelling about it. Our country is governed a lot better than France, and Germany comes about next. Then theres a lot of others, and then comes Persia. Our country allways comes first, whoever you like to ask.'

On one occasion, during the examination of an 'object' lesson on the 'Cow,' I received a most original answer from a scholar. I had asked a series of questions having reference to the practical uses to which the various parts of the cow's carcass are put. And although I was quite satisfied to hear that cups and combs were made of the beast's horns, knife-handles of its bones, leather of its skin, &c., I certainly was somewhat startled and rendered incredulous by hearing one lad inform me, with the most confident and complacent air in the world, that 'wash-leather was made of its stomach!'

The next essay has for its title 'The Irish.' The writer is a lad attending a school situated in one of the poorest districts of Lambeth.

'The Irish are so called because they live in the island of Ireland. It is a beautiful country, which is chiefly noted for three principal classes of things, which is namely, its great greenness, its big bogness, and its little shamrocks. It says in our lessons as green is the favourite colour with all the Irish great and small classes. Shamrock is nothing but a little bit of green clover. But the Irish love it.

'They cant manufacture things in Ireland same as we can, from a trackion ingine to a sowing needle. But still the Irish manufacture the following classes of things very exseedingly, namely, Linin, bacon, shop eggs, and whisky. The Irish are nearly as fond of bacon as they are

of potatoes; and as for that there whisky, the Irish love it. The hearts of the Irish, the book says, are all very warm. If you was walking out in the country and you met a poor man, you could easy tell whether he was an Irishman; for if he was an Irishman he would perhaps be in a pashion and have a pig with him.

'There is one Irishman as nearly everybody nose on, which is Mr Parnell. I have seen his picture in a many different papers, and it is allways the same. He has a nice minister's face, and his eyes look straight out at you. I do like to see his face. Mr Parnell does not dress same as the other Irish, and his eyes seem to draw you to him. He doesnt look as fat as he would like. Them Irish as is poor and lives about here have a queer way of speaking, like as if they had a side-tooth out, and the wind was blowing through it. They seem to have a lot of wind inside of them. These poor men's faces have a lot of rinkles on them, and they look funny at you like what Gypsies do. The Irish women have even got warmer hearts than the men, for they will actully sometimes pull their husbands' cheeks in the street; and when there's no men about, they begin dragging one another's hair off.

'But the Irish are one of the two finest classes of men in the world. The English are a bit fatter, but the Irish can run about and fight the best. The Irish have prodused nearly all our great soldiers, because father told a man in our house that when he once took mother to the Music Hall, there was an Irishman a-kicking up his eels all by himself on the stage, and singing a song which said, What was Wellington? why, an Irishman; what was General More? an Irishman; what was Sir Garnit Woolsey? an Irishman. And father said that he showed the people that everybody as had ever done anything worth menshening was Irishmen. Father said he left out Nelson, because he knew the people woodn't stand it. Then I said to father that if the man had have said as Nelson was an Irishman, that the people owght to have called out as Mr Parnell was an Englishman. Then my father laughed, and told the man he was telling, as I was a fair coshen.'

I was once giving a lesson in physiology, with special reference to the nature and composition of the various 'food-stuffs.' I had compared the human constitution to the mechanism of an ordinary steam-engine, showing the pupils that just as the mechanical force of the latter is due to the burning of the fuel in the furnace, so the power and vigour of the former, or human engine, is dependent upon a very similar internal combustion. I had divided the food-stuffs into the 'flesh-forming' and 'heat-giving' classes, and had clearly explained to the lads—so, at least, I thought—why certain proportions of each class of food were necessary for a thoroughly nourished and vigorous condition of the human machine. Hence the reason, I continued to illustrate, why—as by an intuition—we ate 'ham and eggs' together, 'bread and butter,' &c.; and hence, also, the reason why such articles as milk and whole-meal bread were even in themselves almost 'perfect' foods. Towards the close of the lesson, I asked—by way of recapitulation—why it was advisable that we should always eat a fair

proportion of fat meat with our lean. I was somewhat surprised to observe one lad thrust out his hand very precipitately, since I knew that he was by no means endowed with a specially scientific turn of mind. However, I called upon him for an answer.

'Because, sir, the fat makes the lean slip down better!' he cried, rolling his eyes with satisfaction and smacking his lips with lively relish.

I looked at him as who should say, 'What is the use of endeavouring to entice the feet of such urchins into the mystic groves of the occult sciences?' and he, on his part, gaped back upon me as who should say, 'Well, sir, you are makin' them easy this morning. Why, that was almost as nice and straightforward as a taste of the genuine article. Keep the pot a-boiling, sir!'

The following essay on 'Winter' is an effort by a boy who was eleven years of age at the time of examination. He came from a miserably poor home; for his father was dead, and the mother had to support a little family of three by the labour of her own hands:

'Winter is the 4th season of the year, and therefore it is the coldest. It is so cold that we have fine red fires in the schoolrooms, big enough to boil a sheep on them. You never see such fires anywheres else, not even in the church. They are fires, them are, and no mistake. Whenever I see the schoolkeeper come in with that big skuttle of his, and tippie the coals on, I always think how pleased my mother would be only to have one of them lumps. Why, theres more coals in that one skuttle than there even is in all our coal bin at home. I do wish that my mother was the School Board, so as she could make good fires for her and me and my two little sisters. I never cry with the cold, not me, but our little Hannah does. But then I get so regular warm at school, that it seems to stick to me for ever so long.

'In the winter you have to pick up the bits of coals from the middle of the road after the carts have gone by. This is not stealing, because the coal man would never pick them up hisself. When there is snow upon the ground, the carts bump a good deal and jog more coals out, and besides you see the pieces plainer lying on the ground. Our Hannah has been very ill this winter. Whenever she coughs extry loud, I see the tears come to my mother's eyes. I see her look at Hannah, and then she always wipes her eyes and nose with her apron. I wish as my mother was the School Board.

'You seem to get thinner in winter, and your boots seem to get thinner, and you always feel a lot hungrier. Dont I like that toast and drippin which I have with mother when she gets home from her washing. She toasts 3 or 4 slices at the larndry fire where she works, and so shes only got to warm it a bit afore we eat it. But I shoudnt mind winter very much if it wernt for the chillblanes. Sometimes your toes feel as if theyre tickling one another, and sometimes as if theyre a skorching one another. I feel regular mad with them sometimes. When shall I have some nice thick hard boots again same as what that gentleman give me at school a long time since. He has been to school once or twice since, looking

at our feet under the desks, but every time he came my boots happened not to have no holes in, so he past me by. Perhaps he will come again afore long.'

A NOVEL VESSEL.

CROSS-RIVER communication has always held a foremost place in the duties of the engineer, and the various methods by which it is effected have never failed to produce one of the most interesting problems of his calling. The earliest method of crossing streams too deep for wading or stepping-stones doubtless originated in a falling tree spanning the opening and affording to the primeval savage a means of passage—a device now expanded into the scientific steel girder, with strains on every point calculated with the utmost exactitude, and duly proportioned throughout in accordance with both strength of material and manner of loading. Where bridges are unsuitable owing to obstruction of headway or other causes, tunnels are substituted to effect the desired means of communication.

Yet another means of cross-river communication and one possessing undoubted advantages claims our attention—namely, ferry-boats. Bridges and tunnels are undeniably fixtures, and in this respect compare unfavourably with ferry-boats, which can be readily transferred from point to point to suit the exigences of fluctuating traffic.

Bridges, if built at a sufficient elevation to admit navigation, may require long approaches, an item, in crowded localities and cities where land is valuable, of no small cost; whilst a similar necessity imperatively swells the estimates for tunnels, unless shafts at either end be employed, worked as a rule by hydraulic hoists; an alternative, however, not only involving delay in passage, but requiring considerable outlay in plant, with attendant permanent working expenses. Hence ferries still hold their own, though the inconvenience of using them in tidal waters constitutes a serious drawback. To obviate such difficulty, much ingenuity has been expended in designing landing-stages to rise and fall with the tide, enabling vehicular traffic at all times by traversing an inclined plane, or by means of hoists to proceed on board the ferry. The latest method of dealing with this problem is well worthy of passing note, and will by its novelty hardly fail to merit the attention of our readers.

The vessel recently launched for service on the Clyde, and known under the name of the Patent Elevating Steam-ferry, has as its distinctive feature a platform or deck so constructed that it can be raised and lowered at will, and therefore always maintained at the same level as the quay or landing-place, whatever the state of the tide may be. Passengers and vehicles are therefore able to pass direct on board, and similarly to disembark, without any difficulty. The platform is not lowered for the passage, the vessel having ample stability to carry the heaviest load in safety even with the platform at its maximum height.

The vessel is constructed almost entirely of steel, with a length of eighty feet, breadth forty-

three feet, and depth amidships twelve feet, and has thirteen water-tight compartments.

Six columns carry the platform, which is raised and lowered by a screw working inside each column, a range of fifteen feet being given. Three hundred passengers and eight loaded carts and horses can be accommodated at the same time; or if passengers alone be carried, as many as six to seven hundred can be taken at once. Rails are placed on the platform, and all provision made for conveying across railway carriages and trucks. Two sets of engines are provided, either of which is capable of driving the vessel, in the event of the disablement of the other. The engines are triple expansion, and the vessel is provided throughout with all the latest and most approved appliances. The platform is worked by special separate engines actuating the vertical screws in the columns, already described.

The wear and tear to both horses and vehicles in traversing inclines will be entirely obviated, and the career of this ingenious vessel will be watched with the keenest interest, not merely by engineers and shipbuilders, but by the public generally.

Before closing our account of this novel ship, we may mention that at the same place where it is shortly destined to ply, a tunnel is in course of construction; so that ere long the interesting spectacle of direct competition between the vessel under consideration and a tunnel may be witnessed, and without doubt many problems of great professional interest will be in a fair way to admit of direct solution by the stern test of practical working.

VILANELLE.

THESE half-blown roses, yesternight,
My lady gathered laughingly—
A crimson rosebud, and a white.

She smothered them with fern-leaves quite,
Till through the green you scarce could see
These half-blown roses, yesternight.

Her face was flushed with rosy light;
On each fair cheek shone charmingly
A crimson rosebud, and a white.

I cannot surely tell aright
With what sweet grace she gave to me
These half-blown roses, yesternight;

Gave me, in pledge of all delight
That in the coming days shall be
A crimson rosebud, and a white.

Lady, my days are golden-bright,
Because you plucked, half-playfully,
These half-blown roses, yesternight,
A crimson rosebud, and a white.

H. D. LOWRY.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.